

**Part 573 Safety Recall Report****15E-035****Manufacturer Name :** Curt Manufacturing LLC**Submission Date :** MAY 05,2015**NHTSA Recall No. :** 15E-035**Manufacturer Recall No. :** NR**Manufacturer Information :**

Manufacturer Name : Curt Manufacturing LLC

Address : 6208 Industrial Drive

Eau Claire WI 54701

Company phone : 1-800-738-7213

**Population :**

Number of potentially involved : 134,155

Estimated percentage with defect : 100

**Equipment Information :**

Brand / Trade : U-HAUL Power Tow

Model : Towing Starter Kit

Part No. : TS1

Size : 7,500 lb rating, 2 1/4" drop

Function : NR

Descriptive Information : These products are ball mount assemblies that are attached to vehicles to allow them to tow a trailer. These assemblies are sometimes called towstarts or towstarters. These products were supplied by CURT Manufacturing LLC ("CURT") to U-HAUL, and were sold exclusively by U-HAUL at its retail outlets and on-line under the "U-HAUL Power Tow" brand name.

Production Dates : JUL 01, 2014 - JAN 31, 2015

**Description of Defect :**

Description of the Defect : CURT has determined that when the ball mount assembly is loaded to its maximum rating when a trailer is being towed, it is possible for the ball mount tongue to fracture or break at the bend location.

Description of the Safety Risk : Fracturing of the ball mount tongue will alter the driving characteristics of the towing vehicle, and if the operator of the towing vehicle is not properly utilizing the safety chains for the trailer being towed, it is possible that the trailer could disengage from the towing vehicle, thereby posing a risk of injury to occupants of the towing vehicle or persons outside the vehicle.

Description of the Cause : CURT has determined that beginning in July 2014, the supplier of the ball mount tongue material (steel) changed the process it used for cleaning the surface of the steel after hot-rolling from an acid wash to sand-blasting. This change can reduce the impact properties of the steel, leading to the possibility of fracturing in some towing conditions.

Identification of Any Warning that can Occur : NR

**Supplier Identification :****Component Manufacturer**

Name : Shandong Jiyang Machinery Factory

Address : No. 1 Jiyang Machinery Industrial Park  
Jinan, Shandong FOREIGN STATES 251400

Country : NR

**Chronology :**

On January 27, 2015, CURT received an email from Sean Kelly in the U-HAUL marketing department indicating that the tongues on four TS1 ball mount assemblies had fractured. Over the next 10 days, three of these fractured units were retrieved by CURT (the fourth unit was disposed of in the field by the U-HAUL outlet). CURT inspected the retrieved units and sent them to a laboratory for metallurgical testing. CURT also began testing other ball mount assemblies, including both metallurgical and performance testing. On March 23, 2015, CURT received another TS1 ball mount assembly that had fractured. On that same day, CURT instructed the Chinese manufacturer to hold further production and shipping while testing was ongoing. A fifth fractured TS1 assembly was received by CURT on April 3, 2015. CURT carefully analyzed the test results that were received. The tests indicated that the tongue material on ball mount assemblies manufactured from July 2014 through January 2015 contained physical properties that were below the applicable steel specifications. Based on its review of the test results and its analysis of the possible effects of a fractured ball mount assembly, CURT determined the defect in the ball mount tongue was safety related on April 30, 2015. A total of six fractured assemblies have been reported. No injuries or property damage have been reported to CURT.

**Description of Remedy :**

Description of Remedy Program : CURT will seek from U-HAUL a list of owners that have purchased these ball mount assemblies manufactured during the affected range. CURT will notify these owners and replace these ball mount assemblies, free of charge.

How Remedy Component Differs from Recalled Component : The replacement ball mount assemblies will be manufactured with steel that has been processed in a different manner than the recalled assemblies. The replacement assemblies will also have different date codes than the recalled assemblies.

Identify How/When Recall Condition was Corrected in Production : The supplier of the steel used in the ball mount tongues is now using an annealing process after rolling to ensure the material impact properties are in compliance with the grade requirements. Replacement ball mount assemblies, and future shipments of ball mount assemblies by CURT to U-HAUL, will incorporate steel that has been processed appropriately.

**Recall Schedule :**

Description of Recall Schedule : CURT will notify U-HAUL of the recall on May 5 or 6. CURT will seek from U-HAUL a list of owners that have purchased these ball mount assemblies manufactured during the affected range. CURT will notify these owners beginning by June 1, 2015, and intends to mail all of these owner notifications by June 12, 2015.

Planned Dealer Notification Date : MAY 05, 2015 - MAY 06, 2015

Planned Owner Notification Date : JUN 01, 2015 - JUN 12, 2015

**Purchaser Information :**

The following manufacturers purchased this defective/noncompliant equipment for possible use or installation in new motor vehicles or new items of motor vehicle equipment:

Name : NR

Address : NR

NR

Country : NR

Company Phone : NR

\* NR - Not Reported